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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Academic Summer Camp (ASC) initiated at The Accelerated School (TAS), the country's first charter accelerated school. The ASC delivers educational services to K-7 children and their parents in south central Los Angeles. Students are 40 percent African American and 60 percent Latino, and most qualify for the federal free meals program. The paper discusses how, through the inquiry process, the ASC provided a demonstration of the school as a center of expertise for resolving its challenges and moving beyond them. The paper presents a history of TAS and its unique characteristics resulting from its charter status, discussing how parents at TAS became a catalyst for creating a summer program and how the accelerated schools process provided a mechanism and structure for tapping into the wealth of resources within and beyond the school for building the program. The paper discusses the partnership between TAS and California State University Los Angeles and the resulting Professional Development Center, noting its role in the summer program. It describes components of the ASC, explaining how the program worked in its first year. It concludes by discussing the initial evaluation plan, lessons learned, and future plans. (Contains 18 references.) (SM)

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The Academic Summer Camp: A Demonstration of the School as a Center of Expertise

by

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The Accelerated School

"To do our best for our future, we must put our best into the schools that are in the neighborhoods across our city and nation. We have the opportunity to create a model that will show that it can happen, even in riot-scarred South Central Los Angeles. We have the vision, the capability, and therefore the responsibility to make it happen."

--Johnathan Williams & Kevin Sved,
Founders & Co-Directors,
The Accelerated School

Introduction

Parents in a South Central Los Angeles community were concerned that their children did not have adequate social or academic options for the summer. Traditional summer programs offered in the local public schools were very restrictive in their enrollment policies and most were only open to students in remedial situations. Numerous other programs, such as summer camps, were often very expensive and inaccessible, particularly for families on limited incomes and with numerous children. Through the After School Cadre at ***The Accelerated School*** , these parents, along with staff members from the school, found not only a voice but also a vehicle for addressing

their concerns. The purpose of this article is to describe the Academic Summer Camp (ASC), an innovative program initiated at ***The Accelerated School***, and how, through the inquiry process (Hofenberg et al, 1993), it provided a major demonstration of the School as a center of expertise for resolving its own challenges and going far beyond them.

The article begins with a brief history of ***The Accelerated School (TAS)***, the first Charter Accelerated School in the nation, and its unique characteristics resulting from charter status. The article continues with a discussion of how parents at ***The Accelerated School*** became a catalyst for creating a summer program, and how the accelerated schools process provided a mechanism and a structure for tapping into the wealth of resources within and beyond the school for building the program. From there, the article moves into a discussion of the partnership between ***The Accelerated School*** and California State University, Los Angeles and the Professional Development Center which has resulted from this partnership and its role in the summer program. At this point, the components of the Academic Summer Camp are described along with a general overview of how the program worked in its premier year. The article concludes with a discussion of the initial evaluation plan, lessons learned and future plans.

The Accelerated School as a "Center of Expertise"... A vision becomes reality

The Accelerated School was founded by teachers, Johnathan Williams and Kevin Sved, with the support and assistance of faculty and staff from 99th Street Accelerated School, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles County Office of

Education, the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center at California State University Los Angeles and many teachers, parents and community members. The goal of ***The Accelerated School*** is to provide students with equal access to rich, and challenging curriculum, so that the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and creative potentials of each student can be maximized. All students are encouraged to work independently and with others to become active learners, discoverers, explorers, and participants in the world around them.

The Accelerated School delivers high quality educational services to 170 children in grades K-7 and their parents in South Central Los Angeles (Sved & Williams, 1998). The student population is 40% African-American and 60% Latino, and more than 90% qualify for the federal free meals program. The start-from-scratch charter school opened in leased church facilities to 50 students in September 1994.

The Accelerated School was established by the Los Angeles Board of Education and the State of California as a public school under the Charter Schools Act of 1992 (Selkin, 1997). Under the School's charter status, the Los Angeles Unified School District granted the School fiscal autonomy, freedom from constraints of union participation, and exemption from restrictive state mandates. This independence allows the School's stakeholders to develop meaningful curricula, implement effective educational strategies, utilize innovative students and staff assessment measures, manage school budgets and establish beneficial partnerships. The State of California and the LAUSD are responsible for holding ***The Accelerated School*** accountable for meeting the goals as outlined in the

charter petition. These goals include increasing students test scores and maintaining a high degree of parent involvement. If the School does not meet these goals, the LAUSD may not renew the School's charter petition, which would force the school to close.

Philosophically grounded in the Accelerated Schools model pioneered a decade ago by Dr. Henry Levin of Stanford University, high expectations are placed on all students (Hofenberg et al, 1993; Finnan et al, 1995). Accelerated schools are communities of staff, parents, students, district office representatives, and local community members working together to create the best schools for all children so that every child has the opportunity to succeed as a creative, critical, and productive member of our society. Adults in accelerated school communities work to create for all children the kind of schools they would want for their own children. Accelerated schools are premised on the following three interrelated principles:

*__Unity of Purpose__: Refers to striving among parents, teachers, support staff, students, administrators, the district, and the local community toward a common set of goals for the school that become the focal point of everyone's efforts.

*__Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility__: Refers to the ability of all participants in a school community to (1) make important educational decisions, (2) share responsibility for implementing those decisions, and (3) share responsibility for the outcomes of those decisions.

*__Building of Strengths__: Refers to sharing and utilizing all of the human resources that students, parents, school staff, districts, and local communities bring to the educational experience.

The Accelerated model is a comprehensive enrichment strategy, rather that a

remedial one that offers the greatest hope for reversing the present educational crisis for so many children. Through the use of the inquiry process, the School systematically identifies and addresses challenge areas with active participation from all stakeholders (Hofenberg et al, 1993; Finnan et al, 1994). During the 1997/98 school year, the School's cadres or working groups were established around the priority challenge areas of Curriculum Support, After school Enrichment, and Parent Participation. ***The Accelerated School*** is the only charter school of more than 800 existing accelerated schools that span 40 states of the nation.

Early indicators of success at ***The Accelerated School*** include standardized test scores, which rose dramatically over scores at the students' previous schools, increasing by over 50 percent in Math and 16 percent in reading. The student portfolios and writing journals demonstrate solid academic growth. Student attitudes and behaviors affirm social development. The 95% actual student attendance rate is among the highest in the district. The School's monthly average of 350 volunteer hours benefits the school program and points to a high level of parent and community involvement. The current waiting list of over 800 students points to the great demand for the School's programs.

Special Recognition and Honors: A Model for the Nation

The School has been awarded numerous grants and awards, including a four-year grant made possible by the Annenberg Challenge. School staff and parents are frequently requested to present at local, state and national educational conferences and legislative

hearings. In September of 1997, Co-Director/Co-Founder Johnathan Williams and parent Kevin Jones, presented at President Clinton's Round Table on Charter Schools. In response, President Clinton said The Accelerated School's success "puts a lie to the notion" that some children inherently perform at a lower level than other children.

$6.8 Site Donation: A Permanent Home to Facilitate School Growth

Clothing designer Carole Little and her business partner Leonard Rabinowitz joined forces with the School, donating the former headquarters of the Carole Little Company to serve as the School's permanent home. The site's five buildings, which comprise over 75,000 square feet, will enable the School to serve 600 students K-8 once refurbishment funds are secured. The site is also large enough for the construction of a new high school and other community members, while also serving as a model that will help inspire public school reform across the nation.

Partnership with University and Business: A Dynamic Plan for the Future

The Accelerated School is working with California State University, Los Angeles (CSLA), Wells Fargo Bank, and Carole Little Fashion Industry to raise the level of support and funding necessary to create a seamless and comprehensive educational program for 1200 students, pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade. In collaboration with the nation's only Charter School of Education at CSLA, the School is developing a Professional Development Center (PDC) that will build capacity for all involved in K-12

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education: teachers, instructional assistants, administrators, support personnel, parents, community leaders, and members of the business and government community.

Realizing and building on the strengths of the School community and its growth number of partners in business, higher education, government and the community, the School will develop and operate a vocational training program, adult education programs, day care, infant care programs, an entrepreneurial center, low/middle income housing, businesses, and integrated social and health services. When realized, the School will serve as a national model for rebuilding communities around effective Schools.

The Accelerated School's Mission

We, The Accelerated School, are committed to development of critical thinkers who are competent and courageous citizens eager to achieve and contribute to society. We are an extended, collaborative community of learners, dedicated to providing a challenging curriculum in a safe, creative, and nurturing environment.

Parents as Catalysts for Creating a Summer Program

Parental involvement is a particular area of focus and strength at ***The Accelerated School*** (TAS), and parents are used to having an active role and voice in all school activities as a result of the accelerated schools process (Selkin, 1997; Hofenberg et al, 1993). During the 1997/98 school year, much concern was voiced by parents concerning options for their children during the summer months. The inquiry process provided the perfect tool for focussing in on the challenge area of providing an academic enrichment

program for the summer, forming hypotheses as to why the challenge existed, brainstorming solutions, identifying viable resources both within and outside of the school, and drafting an action plan (Finnan et all, 1994; Hofenberg et all, 1993).

What was most disturbing to parents were the very limited community resources available to their children during the summer months. While some programs did exist, many were not safe or supervised and others were very expensive, particularly for large families or families with limited income. Parents and staff in the After School/Enrichment Cadre had addressed similar challenges in developing the school's After School Program. Among the desired objectives of the Academic Summer Camp, like the After School Program, was that it would provide 1) academic support, 2) both academic and social enrichment, 3) a safe, structured environment, and 4) that it would be enjoyable and meaningful to students. With these goals in mind, parents and staff divided into work teams and began collecting background information on various resources that could be used to build the program. Some of the cadre responsibilities in spearheading the program beyond researching resources included proposing the initial program to the School as a Whole in January, 1998. The staff then presented the idea to the School's Board of Trustees and the TAS/Charter School of Education Professional Development Center Council. Other activities included planning and implementing fundraising, drafting brochures, informing and surveying parents, facilitating with registration, recommending programs and activities to be included in the summer camp, and providing additional supervision for camp activities. The cadre's responsibility also included pilot testing and

assessing the effectiveness of the program and making recommendations to continue the program in the future.

The Role of the Professional Development Center

In an effort to institutionalize the Accelerated Schools model in the School of Education at California State University, Los Angeles, and to infuse innovative strategies in the preparation and support of teachers, the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Partnership was formed with significant support of the Dean, the President of the University, and the Chancellor of the California State University System. The Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center, ***The Accelerated School***, the California State University Charter School of Education, local businesses, and community members (most of whom are parents) form the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Partnership (Mims et al, 1998; Selkin, 1997).

As a result of the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center's work with ***The Accelerated School***, the Dean of the School of Education was inspired to seek and gain "charter" status for the School of Education at Cal State Los Angeles. Numerous benefits were seen by extending the spirit and intent of the charter schools into higher education. Although the charter released the School from many of the regulations that tend to stifle creativity and innovation, it remained for the Charter School of Education to define the process for its own restructuring. The School looked to successful public schools with which it had been working to build its unique design for transformation in order to build

upon the strengths of effective collaboration and partnerships that had been nurtured over the years. The Accelerated Schools model was a fundamental driver of not only the inspiration to change, but also for the philosophy, the process, and governance of that change (Mims et al, 1998; Selkin, 1997)

Central to the mission of the Charter School of Education is the implementation of innovative practices in the professional development of pre-service (inexperienced students in teacher-preparation programs), induction (new teachers), and inservice (experienced) teachers for schools in large culturally diverse urban settings through field-based professional development centers. Traditional teacher education programs and schools of education have been slow to respond to changes occurring in schools across the nation resulting in teachers who are poorly prepared to address challenges existing in today's classrooms . One response to the need for improved teacher education has been the establishment of Professional Development Schools (Centers); collaborative efforts between universities and school districts to design field experiences which are more reflective of classroom realities (McCarthy et al, 1998; Neubert & Binko, 1998, Darling-Hammond, 1994). A particular strength of Professional Development Centers is that they merge the resources and strengths from both K-12 and Institutions of Higher Education (Neubert & Binko, 1998; Mims et al, 1998). A Professional Development Center at an accelerated school site would bring the best of both worlds by providing an environment where meaningful school restructuring was occurring as well as innovative curriculum and instruction were being implemented (Darling-Hammond, 1995; McCarthy

& Riner, 1998).

The Accelerated School functions as a centerpiece demonstration site for the Charter School of Education and also houses one of the field-based Professional Development Centers. New courses and pilot programs are being developed and implemented not only within the Charter School of Education but also in the Professional Development Centers. During Summer 1997, a planning retreat was held among the faculty and staff from both the School and the University to formalize the collaborative development of the Professional Development Center at The Accelerated School. After forging a vision for the role the PDC would play, both at the School and at the University, the group then began to brainstorm goals and pilot activities that would fulfill this broader role of professional development. One of the goals involved the training of cohorts of student teachers in an enriched setting, which would allow for greater peer coaching and collaboration among the student teachers as well as among University and School faculty.

The Academic Summer Camp was the perfect opportunity to develop such a program. The student teaching component was designed to provide an alternative enriched, approach to student teaching which benefited not only the elementary students but also the ten teaching interns who were pioneers of the model. Through collaborative efforts from parents, faculty and staff from ***The Accelerated School*** and the Charter School of Education, The Academic Summer Camp was the culmination of many ideas which seemed to build upon each other. The discussions from the After school

Enrichment Cadre laid the foundation for the basic program model for elementary students while the discussions from the Professional Development planning retreats laid the foundation for the teacher education component.

Alternative Models to Student Teaching

Some innovations introduced in the student teaching experience at the Academic Summer Camp included peer coaching, weekly seminars co-taught by university and K-12 faculty, multi-age classrooms, video assessment and self reflection, professional and academic field trips, and participation in a modified summer camp. Student teachers also had the opportunity to watch and assist the master teacher end the year with her traditional students and then plan and open the summer program with an entirely new group of students. In some cases, that meant moving from one school and grade level to another.

Peer Coaching (Kagan & Bobertson, 1996) and collaborative assessment (Lewis, 1998) were primary strategies utilized with the student teachers since a pair of student teachers were assigned to each classroom and worked with a single master teacher. One of the benefits of peer coaching is that it offers a greater support system for introducing and sustaining classroom innovations. As teachers try out new ideas, they can direct their peer coach on the aspects of the lesson where they are most in need of feedback and guidance. Student teachers are able to share their successes and failures in a non-threatening environment, realizing that teaching is a continuous act of

experimentation, reflection, and refinement. They are also able to plan step by step intervention strategies with their peer coach as well as the master teacher.

Each student teaching pair consisted of an induction teacher, with an emergency credential and a pre-service teacher who was assuming full-time classroom teaching responsibilities for the first time. The experienced master teachers provided the inservice component to the peer coaching model, and were eager to give and receive feedback on the instructional strategies implemented by themselves as well as their student teachers. There were numerous opportunities for the student teachers and master teachers to collaborate on all curricular and instructional activities at multiple levels in terms of classroom management and organization, unit design, lesson development and implementation, and assessment.

The weekly seminars provided an expanded opportunity for peer coaching and collaboration beyond the individual classrooms. During the two-hour seminars the student teachers would share concerns and ideas with the full cohort group, as well as with the seminar instructors. In addition, the agendas for the seminars were developed with input from the student teachers, the master teachers, and the instructors as they confronted issues throughout the summer experience. Some of the seminar topics included classroom management, thematic instruction/interdisciplinary lesson planning, building an interactive classroom environment, cultural dynamics, and working with others in the classroom. The seminars were rated by the student teachers as one of the most beneficial aspects of the summer program because of the many levels of support and

feedback they received both professionally as well as emotionally.

One of the most challenging aspects of the student teaching experience was having two peer coaching partners, one for the academic morning program, and another partner and grade level for the modified camp programs in the afternoons. In addition, student teachers worked with the same master teacher for the academic morning program, but shifted to different camp counselors and activities in weekly rotations for the afternoons. The initial intention was to broaden the exposure of the student teachers to multiple grade levels as well as to all camp activities in addition to exposing them to varied activities that would not have been possible with the traditional student teaching assignments. It was also to provide an opportunity to work with a different peer coach. Still, in spite of the original intent, the multiple classroom configurations and responsibilities often introduced unexpected challenges in terms of lesson planning and articulation for the student teachers. Overall, peer coaching was viewed by the majority of student teachers as an asset and great support in the classrooms; and a very effective tool for lesson planning, reflection and implementation.

A final dimension of the student teaching component of the academic summer camp was that it also served as a powerful learning laboratory for everyone involved (Darling-Hammond, 1995). The program was constantly being adjusted as a result of the collaborative reflection that was taking place at all levels. As the master teachers learned of the peer coaching strategies that were to be implemented among the student teachers, they also wanted to receive similar feedback from the student teachers, and viewed the

peer coaching as a chance for them to expand their teaching repertoire as well. A mentoring model was also used among the university supervisors where an experienced university supervisor coached and co-taught the weekly seminars with the summer camp coordinator who was also a master teacher. This laboratory experience culminated into an actual powerful learning lab when participants in an accelerated schools coaches training were brought over on a field trip as part of their powerful learning orientation (Finnan, et al, 1994).

The Academic Summer Camp Program Components

The design and implementation of the Academic Summer Camp resulted from numerous collaborative planning meetings of the After school Enrichment Cadre members, the Professional Development Center Council members, the School as a whole, and faculty and staff from the summer program. In order to address the original concerns of the parents in designing a summer program; including academic support, academic and social enrichment, a safe, structured environment and fun, a new model needed to be created. The program was developed for students in grades K-7 during the summer vacation period. The six-week program includes summer school, afternoon camp environment and provided extended care for parents.

The Academic Summer Camp was divided into two sections; an academic morning, similar to most traditional summer school programs, and a summer camp afternoon featuring more extended day camp-like activities such as arts and crafts. The

academic morning extended from 8:30 to 11:30. It provided opportunities for students to participate in interdisciplinary experience-based lessons which included reading, math, social studies, writing, language development, science, the arts, computer science and physical education. The classes were limited to twenty -twenty-five students.

For the academic portion of the day, credentialed and experienced teachers were recruited to provide a strong, engaging and fun curriculum. Because of the six-week time frame, master teachers were encouraged to implement thematic or project-based planning strategies. The 4th/5th grade classroom did a unit on the ocean where students dissected fish, recreated an inflatable life-size whale, studied and created their own aquariums, explored ocean fossils and read fiction and nonfiction literature related to the ocean. In a first/second combination classroom, the students toured the would in a unit entitled: "Around the World". In this unit the students explored a country or continent each week through literature, poems and songs. In their study of China, the students read ***The Empty Pot*** by Demi and discussed the rewards of telling the truth. They also developed their understanding of story elements such as character, plot, problem and solution. In the K/first class the students participated in a unit on "Feelings and Fears" through which they had an opportunity to learn about and explore their feelings and their fears while also developing coping strategies and building self-esteem. The sixth/seventh grade class developed a newsletter on the summer program in which they were able to combine their writing and reporting skills with multiple uses of technology to share highlights of the summer program.

Each master teacher was assigned two student teachers to mentor and share her class with. The master teachers were required to spend at least one hour a day mentoring in addition to planning and reviewing lessons with their student teachers. The curriculum for the summer program was developed and implemented by all three teachers. The student teachers took over all the planning and implementation of the curriculum during the final week. The support system for student teachers was not only their mentors; one master teacher was also a student teacher supervisor and was available as an additional resource, as well as the traditional university supervisor.

The camp portion of the day included a daily opening rally after lunch. Soon after all the students came together in the courtyard, they were broken up into camp groups. Students participated in three activities a day on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. Those activities included cooking, arts and crafts, sports, theatre, computers, and music. Thursday was water day. The older children walked about a mile to a public pool while the younger children enjoyed a three-foot pool and other water games. Water safety was taught and reinforced as focal point of all water activities. Wednesday was trip day. In accordance with the principal of "building on strengths", the Academic Summer Camp utilized educational resources of the community. Students went on trips to most local museums (LACMA, Page, Automobile, Natural History, California Science Center), parks, the public library and other locations accessible by public transportation. The camp also included optional trips to Disneyland, Magic Mountain, The Hollywood Bowl, and Sea World.

The School's current After School program formed the basis of the afternoon program From 1:00-4:30, students rotated through a guided instructional sequence in the arts, recreation, and computer technology designed to support the emotional, cognitive, and physical development of each student. Themes were chosen to better coordinate and unify the activities in the summer program, and some themes were even united with the academic morning to reinforce lessons and concepts. The school also provided federally funded breakfast and lunch programs throughout the summer. In addition to the formal instruction provided in the morning and afternoon programs, tutoring and extended day care were also available from 7:15 to 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. as a service to working parents.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the program, an evaluation plan was designed which addressed each of the program's original four goals (Sved & Hunt, 1999). These goals were:

1. To meet students' needs for ongoing exposure to academic subjects, with the result of improving their academic achievement;
2. To provide students with a range of enjoyable recreation activities;
3. To meet families' needs for quality summer programs and child care; and
4. To provide high-quality student teaching experiences for teaching interns completing their credentials at California State University, Los Angeles.

The initial evaluation plan included specific measures for each of the program's four goals. For goal 1 (improved student achievement), a comparison of student test scores from 1998 to 1999 were planned with the expectation that the scores of students

participating in the camp would be superior to those of the students who did not participate. For goal 2, (range of enjoyable recreational activities) student satisfaction measures were implemented with the expectation that students would express their satisfaction and want to return to the program. For goal 3 (parent satisfaction), parent satisfaction measures were implemented with the expectation that if this goal was met, parents would express a high degree of satisfaction with the program and want it to continue. For goal 4 (quality student teaching experience), a variety of student teacher evaluations were implemented. In addition to their traditional student teaching performance evaluations, student teachers also completed a detailed written evaluation of their experiences at the school. Their input, along with that of their supervisors and TAS staff and Co-Directors was reviewed with the expectation that these comments and the overall performance of the student teachers would help to determine the quality of their student teaching experience at the school. Interviews with key staff members for the summer program including the Coordinator of the Academic Program and TAS Student Teaching Supervisor; the Coordinator of the Afternoon Program; and the CSLA Faculty Supervisor provided more qualitative information of the program.

Conclusions, Lessons Learned, and Future Plans

Since the Academic Summer Camp was introduced as a pilot program, several assessment measures were implemented simultaneously to assist in its overall evaluation. These included a) Parent Survey, b) Student Survey of Program (favorite activities, what

they learned, if they wanted to come back next year, and how they felt the program could be made better), c) Student Teacher Evaluation of Student Teaching Experience, d) Powerful Learning Lab Reflection for Accelerated Schools Coaches, and e) Summer Progress Assessment completed by teachers for the K-7 students in the areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Performing/Visual Arts, and Behavior. Interviews and Focus group discussions were also conducted by the School administration, faculty and staff, and the University supervisors. From these formal and informal assessments, many lessons were learned that have gone into the planning for future Academic Summer Camps.

One of the first lessons learned was that it could be done! The camp was viewed as an overall success and it accomplished its original goals. For goal 1 (improved student achievement), the test results for this year were not available at the time this article was written since students take the Stanford-9 in late April. A recommendation was to administer a pre-test and post-test in academic areas at the beginning and end of the Academic Summer Camp as a more expedient way to assess student learning and academic improvement. For goal 2 (range of enjoyable recreation activities), Fifty students responded to questions on a written survey. Of those polled, forty-five said they would want to return next year. Favorite activities were learning math, reading, and writing; specific science material; geography activities; cooking, arts and crafts, field trips, and playing sports. When asked about what they would change about the program, the majority of their responses recommended better food and not having to walk to the pool.

In order to broaden feedback from a wider range of students, one recommendation was to run evaluation groups for all students and to tape record sessions for later use. Another suggestion was to consider options other than walking and public transportation for field trips and to consider adding more variety to cafeteria offerings.

For goal 3 (parent satisfaction), thirteen parents responded to a written survey. Parents responded to the following items:

- ***I believe that my child learned important knowledge during the program.*** All thirteen parents responded "yes" to this item, with very positive comments about student learning.
- ***I believe that my child improved skills (reading, writing, and math) from the program***. Twelve parents answered "yes" and one answered "don't know". "I am so impressed that she learned so much in such a short period." was typical comment.
- ***What would your child have done this summer if she/he hadn't attended ASC?*** All parents except two indicated that their children would have been home with a grandmother, older sibling, or babysitter if they had not attended the program.
- ***Would you send your child to ASC again next summer if it's offered?*** All parents responded positively. A typical comment was: "I could afford it and it worked with my schedule."
- ***Please describe what you liked best about the program.*** Parents had a variety of comments. Several identified the combination of academic and recreational activities as the program's greatest advantage; also mentioned were the opportunities for learning, fun, and making friends, and the hard-working teachers and afternoon program staff.
- ***Please describe ways that you think the program could be better***. Five of the nine comments concerned the afternoon field trips. Some parents felt the field trips were too expensive while others cited the need for transportation for the field trips.

Overall, parents' comments were overwhelmingly positive. This indicates that even though all parents were not represented by the survey, the goal of fulfilling families' needs for quality summer programs and childcare appears to have been met.

Recommendations for this goal included increasing parent participation in evaluation procedures by running evaluation group meetings in English and Spanish at the end of the summer program and tape recording parents' responses. Another recommendation was to consider finding subsidized support for part of the field trip expenses.

For goal 4 (quality student teaching experience), eight student teachers completed the student teacher evaluation and all ten successfully completed their student teaching assignments. Some of the strengths they sited in their student teaching experience were being paired with peers in the classroom, having incredible master teachers, the weekly student teaching seminars, and the opportunity to complete the assignment in an innovative summer program. Some suggestions made by student teachers for improving the program were clearer explanations for expectations in the afternoon program and greater links to the academic morning; more advance notice of field trips; more guidance to afternoon counselors for safety procedures; and working with the same grade level for the full day.

Some of the successes mentioned by Master Teachers regarding the summer program included the extensive planning time and the opportunity to work with a pair of student teachers, the chance to collaborate with other master teachers, the smaller adult to student ratio, students being able to participate in a quality summer program at a reasonable fee, and sharing in the peer coaching experience where they were also able to reflect upon their own teaching effectiveness.

The student teachers rated the peer coaching and the weekly seminars as most

beneficial to them. They were challenged by the grade level and counselor switch between the morning and afternoon programs, and desired more specific guidance for the afternoon portions of the day. Master teachers enjoyed the academic mornings, but would have enjoyed participating in more of the extended activities had more funds been available. It was hard to monitor student absenteeism, which sometimes became a problem with summer vacation schedules. Overall, students enjoyed the summer program's extended activities and were quite varied in terms of what they identified as their favorite aspects of the program.

Through collaborative efforts of parents, community, School and University faculty and staff, what started out as a good idea later manifested into a very successful summer experience. The fundraising campaigns were also successful in that 50% of the money was raised from foundations, 20% through friends of The Accelerated School, and 30% through tuition paid by parents. The biggest validation of the program is the overwhelming desire to have it continue in the coming years. Plans are now underway and initial funds have already been raised for the 1999's Academic Summer Camp. Some of additional recommendations for future Academic Summer Camps are:

1. Additional pre-planning time for master teachers conducted before the program starts.
2. Clearer description of student teaching responsibilities, particularly for the afternoon portion of the program, be provided before student teachers agree to the assignment.
3. All Master teachers and student teachers attend the Parent Orientation before the camp begins.
4. University Supervisors meet with master teachers as a group throughout the summer, and perhaps be included in at least one of the seminars.
5. Student teachers will remain with the same class and grade level for both the academic morning and the afternoon.

6.The academic morning be extended by one half -our.
7.Provide each classroom with a code for making copies and separate materials from academic/afternoon programs.
8.Organize field trips differently to accommodate for age of students, weather conditions, and distance from school.
9.Coordinate some aspects sooner such as T-shirts, Field Trips, Theme follow-up, etc.

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